



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Business Services
Secretariat
Room 6229
Tomlinson House
Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys
FY5 3WP

Ref: FOI2023/06322

Email: DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.uk

6 June 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 19 May 2023 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

"Please provide details of the following, in total and broken down by year since the Veterans UK and ICP (and any antecedent organisations) were formed:

- The total number of complaints into Veterans UK, broken down into relevant stage levels*
- The number of those complaints about Veterans UK referred to the ICP*
- How many ICP reports resulting from those referrals recommended Veterans UK took action, and how many did not (ie the complaint was dismissed)*
- Of the ICP reports that recommended action by Veterans UK, how many actions were recommended in total, and how many of those recommended actions were accepted by Veterans UK*
- How long on average it took Veterans UK to provide a substantive response to the ICP reports that recommended action, broken down into response times where Veterans UK accepted the recommended actions and response time where they did not*
- Anonymised details of any and all compensation paid by Veterans UK for delay, maladministration or similar complaint, including whether interest was awarded, prior to ICP referral.*
- Anonymised details of any and all compensation recommendations made by ICP for delay, maladministration or similar complaint, including whether interest was recommended, and details of whether Veterans UK accepted each recommendation (including amounts paid)*
- Statistics on how many complaints about Veterans UK were forwarded to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, with anonymised details of the outcome of each.*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held. However, I must advise you that we would not be able to answer your request without exceeding the

appropriate cost limit.

Section 12 of the FOIA makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate cost limits, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving, and extracting the information.

You have requested data relating to complaints, the Independent Complaints Panel (ICP) and Parliamentary Ombudsman activity broken down by year since Veterans UK and the ICP (and any antecedent organisations) were formed. Our electronic records do not date back this far and as such, the information you have requested is not held centrally. To fully answer your request would involve a manual search of every case file held, to determine whether a complaint was made, of which there is in the region of 1.6 million files. It is estimated that this would equate to in excess of 268,834 hours' worth of effort, far exceeding the appropriate cost limit.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) the department may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you were to refine your request by asking for data relating to complaints dating back to 2013, and data relating to the questions regarding the ICP and Ombudsman dating back to Financial Year 2021/22.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,



Defence Business Services (Secretariat)